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Locks and Dams... *or Dams and Locks*

STORY BY ALAN DOOLEY, PA

We almost always see the combination of navigation and water control structures referred to in that order: Lock, or Locks and Dams.

Indeed, the subject of emergency lock closures makes news as barge tows accumulate on river banks waiting to pass through locks from one pool elevation to another. Discussions of adding larger lock chambers to make navigation more efficient have been a parallel subject in the news and the public's eye for decades.

But the adjacent dams are seldom subjects of news or of discussions of visions for their futures.

Recently, an interesting view of the hulking structure of one of the giant tainter dam gates that control the Mississippi River pool above the Melvin Price Locks and Dam near Alton, Ill., was possible when one dam chamber, or more correctly, gatebay, was dewatered for maintenance. This marked only the second time that this view has been possible in the 19 year life of this facility, the newest on the Mississippi River. The view from the bottom reminded one that,

— SEE *TAINTER GATE*, PAGE 8

USACE photo by George Stringham

From the Corner Office



Col. Thomas E. O'Hara, Jr.

I wanted to start my message this month with a "Thank you" to all of you who gave so generously to this year's Combined Federal Campaign. In case you haven't heard, the MVS family really stepped up and contributed a total of \$60,751. That exceeds our goal by \$7,751! I salute you all and thank you again for making the decision to make a difference this year. Great job!

Shifting focus, many of you heard COL Thomas O'Donovan, the Afghanistan Engineer District Commander, Wednesday, December 3. COL O'Donovan's main mission was to recruit people to volunteer to go to Afghanistan. But he also acknowledged that there are critical needs throughout the region to support the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT.)

Although he acknowledged that

many are enticed by the financial incentives of the deployment, he said that there are a great many other rewards that come from volunteering. When he talks to past deployers, he is most struck by the feeling of satisfaction that they mention. Most have never before experienced the satisfaction that comes from seeing projects move from conception to delivery in the course of a single deployment.

COL O'Donovan told us that they aren't just looking for "warm bodies." Rather, they need people with specific skills and a willingness to give 110 percent to support the levels of performance demanded by the GWOT.

Acknowledging that the process of being selected and then deployed is difficult, he said, "We make it hard because we need hard people."

What he said applies equally to manning Gulf Region North (GRN) in northern Iraq, a mission assigned to the Mississippi Valley Division. That region encompasses the oil fields of northern Iraq and rolling agricultural land that feeds much of the region. It also includes famous cities such as Mosul and Kirkuk.

I urge everyone to look at both the challenges and opportunities of deploying to the GRN. It is a critical and rewarding mission.

And for those who are interested, there financial rewards. You can certainly put a new Harley under your tree next year – like I did after my first deployment to

Afghanistan in 2002 – or achieve any number of other financial goals. But most importantly in the long term, you can make a difference – like you did with the CFC this year.

While COL O'Donovan was here he had an opportunity to meet and thank Sharon Jones – Randy Jones' wife. Let me share the story, if you don't know it. Randy, who served as our lock master at Locks 27, completed two tours in Afghanistan.

While Randy was there he did what he could to fill needs beyond engineering and construction, although he did that magnificently

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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ST. LOUIS DISTRICT



Congratulations to the St. Louis District for once again surpassing all goals layed before you.

The goal for this year's Combined Federal Campaign was \$53,000. Upon the conclusion of the campaign, \$60,751 was raised.

Your 2008 CFC team:

| CFC Coordinator - Tan Gates | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Kathy Apple | Pat Augustyniak | Dana Barrentine | Shelly Barunica |
| Jessica Berger | Shirley Bledsoe | Brenda Choisser | Chris Coe |
| Kathy Crone | Rob Daniel | Connie Driscoll | Karen Fountain |
| Teri Geahlen | Shirley Hamilton | Ron Jones | Sheri Keleman |
| Chris Leffeler | David Meyer | Teresa Montgomery | Lesia Nohren |
| Mae Palmer | Vivian Ratliff | Peter Russell | Nancy Santel |
| Rhonda Smith | Trisha Stavelly | Barb Townsend | Arnold Washington |
| Molly Wiegand | Pat Wohlschlaeger | Anne Woodrome | Cindy Zimmerman |

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as well. For example, he had Sharon take money from his salary and go to Goodwill and buy dozens and dozens of pairs of used but still serviceable work shoes and socks. She sent them to him and he handed them out to Afghan laborers who needed a pair of shoes before they could get a job.

On his second tour he heard a tribal leader tell how the brutal winters of mountainous Afghanistan affected children. "Many will freeze for lack of a blanket," he was told.

One hundred days after Randy returned to the US from his second deployment, he died in a tragic auto accident on his way to work. The whole District family mourned his loss and his family especially grieved.

But his wife Sharon "soldiered" on. I had the distinct honor to meet Sharon this last week. She truly is a great American who epitomizes the ideals of selfless service that Randy regularly showed. Even though Randy could never make his planned

third deployment to Afghanistan, she carried out his intent, creating with her own hands, numerous blankets, which she sent in his name to Afghanistan. She asked our USACE leaders there, to give them to children to help them better endure this winter, and they have been handed out. As a result of her selfless efforts, numerous Afghan children will be warm this winter. Sharon and Randy's spirit is an example for all of us to follow.

Seeing things get done, and making a difference – a real difference – are just two of the many satisfactions that come from the GWOT deployment experience. I urge you to consider the opportunity, the call to action and to answer it. Ask any of your colleagues who have preceded you and I am confident they will share their satisfaction and help you find your own.

Please have a safe and joyful Holiday Season.

Essayons. Hooah!
Col. Thomas E. O'Hara, Jr.

Returning Warriors find work in District

STORY BY *GEORGE STRINGHAM, PA*

Returning home from a deployment can be a difficult task for just about anyone, even if you weren't stationed in a combat zone. Adjusting to a more "regular" sleep pattern and getting re-acquainted with your friends and family are just two examples that our returning warriors, both civil and uniformed, must face. Now imagine trying to do it while recovering from an injury.

The Secretary of Defense designated November as Warrior Care Month in an effort aimed at increasing awareness of programs and resources available to wounded, ill and injured service members, their family members and those who care about them. Each branch of service has programs to provide the necessary attention, both medical and non-medical, to those in need.

Though the existence of this program may be transparent to most people walking through the hallways, the St. Louis District, like other Districts and government agencies, does play a role in this program. Over the past several months, the District has been fortunate to employ the expertise of two Soldiers in the Army's Warrior Care and Transition Program.

Spc. Larry Payne is one such member. In December, 2007, Payne received back and neck injuries while stationed in An Nasiriyah in southern Iraq. He was initially treated at Eisenhower Army Medical Center at Fort Gordon, Ga., but was released and is now receiving treatment at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Scott, AFB. His Army Reserve unit is the 1015th Combat Support Command in Atlanta, but he's from the St. Louis area. That's how he came to be with the St. Louis District.

Normally, when not in fatigues, Payne is an Environmental Service Supervisor at St. John's Mercy Medical Center here in St. Louis. However, due to his injuries and ongoing treatment, he is still on active duty and is working through the Army's Warrior Transition Unit in Little Rock, Ark.

"The program has several purposes," Payne explained. "But primarily, it allows the servicemember to receive the necessary treatment while also allowing them the opportunity to transition back into a more-civilian lifestyle."

He also explained that most, if not all, members of the different services transition programs are working in other federal agencies, thus granting them the opportunity to see other facets of the government they might not otherwise see.

"I was amazed at everything that the Corps of Engineers does. I knew about navigation and the dams, but not everything else," Payne exclaimed, referring to flood risk management and the various other water

resource missions Congress has bestowed on the Corps of Engineers. "I was flabbergasted!"

Another member of the Army's Warrior Transition Unit is Staff Sgt. Robert Farnsworth, though he's out of the unit at Fort Leonard Wood. While deployed to Iraq, he suffered a variety of wounds during a firefight. These ranged from bulging discs in his back and a torn cuff on his shoulder, to an arrhythmic heart and hearing damage. During his brief stay at the District, Farnsworth spent his time in the District's Geospatial Branch, working on a project mapping the various tributaries of the Illinois River. Although the District was able to take advantage of his geospatial expertise, he was a surveyor and geospatial analyst, Farnsworth's first responsibility was to recover from his injuries.

These are two examples of how this program is helping our returning veterans recover from their injuries, while, at the same time, easing their transition back to the civilian workforce.



Spc. Larry Payne at his desk in Human Resources. Payne is working out of the St. Louis District office while receiving treatment for back and neck injuries he sustained while deployed to Iraq in 2007-08.

USACE photo by George Stringham

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO, DEPLOYING FOR OIF/OEF

STORY BY NICOLE DALRYMPLE, GULF REGION DIVISION PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Part 1 of a two part series. Public Affairs Specialist Nicole Dalrymple is currently at an early point in her second deployment to Iraq. A veteran of deployment to the Gulf Region North, she is working with the Gulf Region Division in Baghdad this time. Nicole has written about the preparation and deployment process. She's in the global – so ask her yourself if you need information.

The decision to deploy to either Iraq or Afghanistan is a personal one and everyone's motivation is different. Only you will know if it is the right thing for you.

For some, the deployment process happens quickly and goes smoothly. For others it can be a bit more arduous. Some of it will hinge on the type of job you are filling, its criticality, whether you apply through a job posting on the Army's Civilian Personnel On-Line portal or whether you are filling a tasker.

Some of it will also depend on space available at the USACE Deployment Center (UDC) in Winchester, Virginia, co-located with the Transatlantic Programs Center.

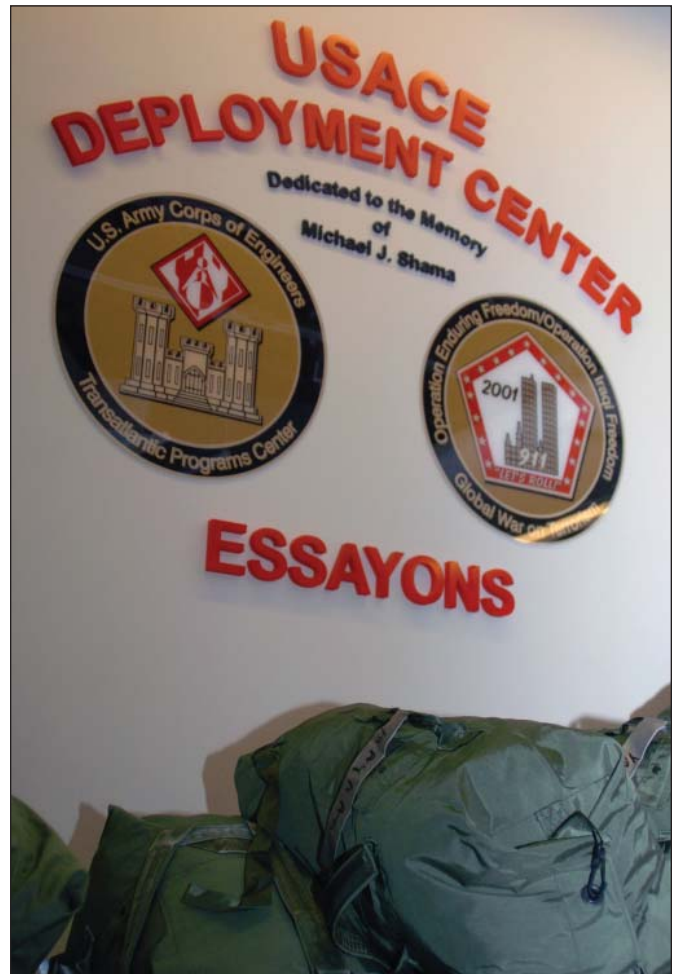
For me, the deployment process took about two months from application to arriving at the deployment center. Once you accept a position you will be contacted by a representative from the Administrative Personnel Processing Office (APPO). They will provide you a website link and other documentation to get you started on your pre-deployment processing.

Items you will need include a secret security clearance, a passport (can be an official or personal one) and a government travel card.

Probably the most time intensive aspects of preparing to deploy include the online training and your medical appointments. Fortunately some of the annual training required in the District will apply: Information Awareness training, SAEDA/OPSEC and Anti-Terrorism Force Protection Training.

Needed courses may include Trafficking in Persons, Composite Risk Management, Reporting Intelligence Activity, Personnel Recovery Training, Cultural Training and Army Accident Avoidance. Completing these courses earns certificates, which you will need to fax copies to your APPO. I also highly recommend bringing copies with you to the UDC, particularly your Information Assurance certificate. You will be asked for that at the UDC and at your deployed location.

Additionally you will have to complete a Personal Recovery file, which is a bit time consuming and will require a front and profile picture of yourself.



USACE photo courtesy of Transatlantic Programs Center

There are numerous forms to complete; some are sent to your APPO and others are turned into the District's Human Resource Office. Keep copies of everything. Everything!

While not part of your deployment check list, you may want to consider completing a Power of Attorney and Living Will before you deploy.

Start medical screening early. When you are mentally preparing for a deployment, the worse thing that can happen is getting pushed back when you had a pre-set day to deploy. Making sure your medical screening is done early will help greatly.

We are fortunate in the District headquarters to have the Occupational Health Unit downstairs. The staff is wonderful. They took care of a majority of my medical preparation. They did my blood work, gave me most of my shots, did the audiogram and the health unit's doctor did my medical exam.

— SEE *KNOW BEFORE YOU GO*, NEXT PAGE

AED COMMANDER VISITS DISTRICT



Col. Thomas O'Donovan, Commander, Afghanistan Engineer District, visited the St. Louis District to visit with Sharon Jones (Randy Jones' widow), past deployers to Afghanistan and other District members. Here, Col. O'Donovan gives a "Lunch 'n' Learn" at the District Headquarters building to a packed house in Executive Conference Room One. O'Donovan talked about the advantages and dangers of deploying to Afghanistan, while also touching on the District's road ahead, in regards to their mission and projected work load.

USACE photo by Alan Dooley

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

It took about three weeks to take care of everything. So schedule your medical appointments as soon as possible.

Required shots for deployment include anthrax, hepatitis A and B, influenza, MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella), polio, small pox, tetanus, tuberculin skin test and typhoid. Any shots you can't get during pre-deployment will be given by the medical staff at the UDC.

If you have special health considerations, or prefer to use your own doctor, you will need to coordinate with the Readiness Branch and the Safety

Office for reimbursement. TAC sends the District funds to cover your labor and pre-deployment medical exams.

I can't stress it enough: ensure all your paperwork is in order and ready to go two weeks before you arrive at TAC. Some people have gotten bumped two weeks because they were not "green" for deployment.

In addition to all your pre-deployment work, you also need to ensure you plan enough time to wrap up things at work, pack and spend quality time with your loved ones prior to deployment.

Look for Part II in the next edition of Esprit.

Emerald Ash Borer found at Wappapello Lake: *Drawing the battle lines in Southeast Missouri*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY NICOLE DALRYMPLE, PA

The battle lines are being drawn in Southeast Missouri after the discovery of an emerald ash borer infestation at Wappapello Lake. A multi-agency effort between local, state and federal agencies is in full swing to contain the spread of this invasive species that has been found

in nine other states and is threatening the ash tree population.

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an emerald-colored exotic beetle native to Asia that was first confirmed in southeastern Michigan in 2002. The bug is suspected to have arrived on one of the many cargo vessels that cross the Pacific Ocean with

commodities and wares for the American market. The introduction of non-native species is one of the potential impacts of globalization and increased trade between nations.

The EAB, not much larger than a thumbtack, plants its eggs in the bark of ash trees. Its larvae hatch and burrow below the bark, feeding on the cambium, or living layer of the tree. The larvae's feeding activities begin to cut the tree off from its source of water and nutrients. The larvae emerge as emerald ash borers in the spring and fly to other ash trees, starting the cycle over. The beetles live only a couple days after emerging.

Ash trees on the Asian continent have natural resistances to these beetles and their natural life cycles. North American ash trees, which make up about 25 percent of the nation's forests, have no similar resistances and are being killed by these pests.

The beetles seek out already distressed trees that are vulnerable and easy targets. The only ways to know for sure if a tree is infested are D-shaped exit holes from the beetles emerging in the spring and s-shaped galleries visible when the bark is removed. The galleries are the aftermath of the larvae feasting on the cambium layer of the tree.

James Gracey, a forester with the Army Corps of Engineers at Wappapello, explained that there are four species of ash at the lake: white, blue, green and pumpkin. "All four are naturally occurring in Missouri and all four are vulnerable to the EAB," he said.

"Ash is a very valuable wood," Gracey added. "It is used for lumber



These s-shaped galleries found below the bark positively identify an emerald ash borer infestation. The emerald ash borer plants its eggs in the bark of ash trees. Its larvae hatch and burrow below the bark, feeding on the cambium, or living layer of the tree. The larvae's feeding activities begin to cut the tree off from its source of water and nutrients.

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in some cases, maybe the structure should be called a “Dam and Lock.”

Each tainter gate at the Melvin Price Locks and Dam weighs some 1 million pounds. There are nine identical gates in the dam. They serve to regulate the flow of water through the dam in order to manage pool depth upstream of the dam.

Dewatering was necessary to replace the giant steel cables that raise the gates, which modulate the flow of water through the dam.

The gatebay actually had to be dewatered twice due to unexpected late season flooding on the Mississippi River, according to structural engineer Tom Quigley, of the St. Louis District.

“We had dewatered the structure and the river again rose rapidly. At a predetermined elevation, water pressing against the bulkheads -- steel barricades that isolate the gates to allow them to be worked on in the dry -- became high enough to make it necessary to rewater the gatebay to equalize pressures,” Quigley said.

That meant that tons of mud and debris has to be removed twice. Upstream bulkheads, which are stored under the top of the giant concrete dam structure, were put in place by a crane on top of the dam. Downstream bulkheads were brought from St. Louis and placed by a floating crane.

When bulkheads cannot be put in place, much work must be done by divers, with the expenses and safety challenges that that implies.

Tainter gates are curved moveable steel gates that are raised and lowered to maintain pool depths up stream of the dam. The dams containing them serve primarily to ensure adequate depth of the pool.

Tainter gates are the design of structural engineer James Burnham Tainter, from Wisconsin. A type of radial arm gate, the side view shows a circular section curved plate facing upstream, anchored to a trunnion bearing that allows it to move up and down, transferring the force of the water pushing

against them into a dam’s concrete monoliths, or structure.

The tainter gate is usually raised by chains or cables and moves down under its own weight. Water flowing under the gate helps raise and lower it.

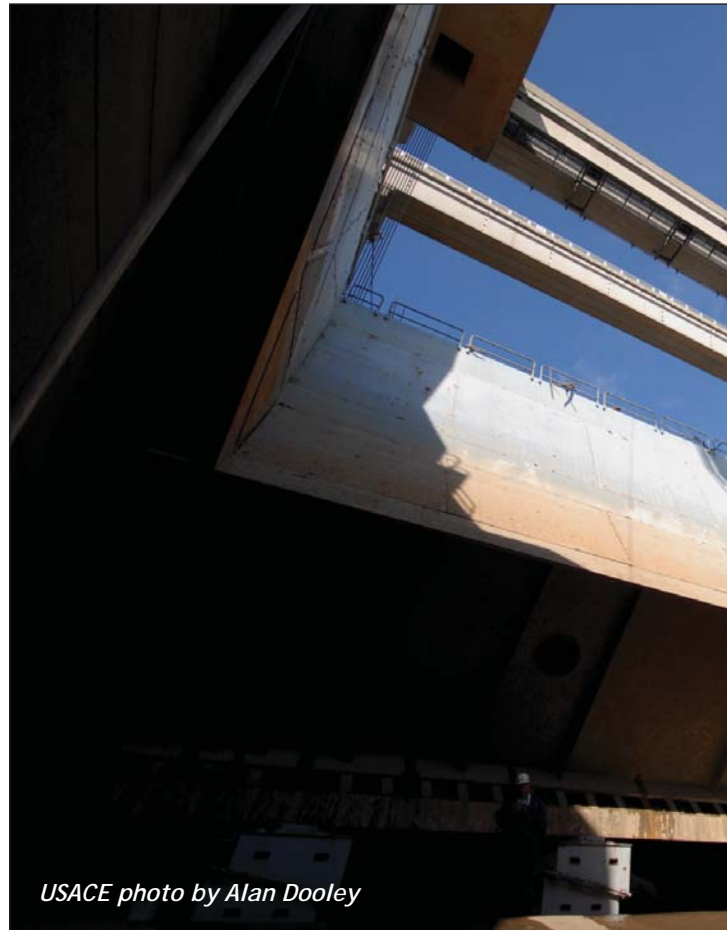
The first tainter gate was incorporated in 1936 into Mississippi River Lock and Dam 7 at La Crescent, Minn. Today there are some 321 tainters in Mississippi River dams. Another type of dam gate is known as a roller gate.

During the dewatering, St. Louis District engineers were able to take advantage of the opportunity to observe and check out other elements of the dam structure that are seldom visible or even reachable to anyone other than divers.

Quigley said he was extremely interested in observing the dewatered dam bay. “This offered us an opportunity to visually examine the below-water surface of the dam. During my career with the Corps, I have never had the opportunity to



USACE photo by George Stringham



USACE photo by Alan Dooley

(Left) Jim Adden, a machinist at Melvin Price Lock and Dam, is dwarfed by the massive steel structure that lift and support the gates are accessible for maintenance. (Above) At the Melvin Price Locks and Dam near Alton, Ill., the massive steel tainter gates, like other such gates, regulates flows and depths of water on the Mississippi River. (Right) A Bobcat skidsteer, which was craned in to help workers, Danny Bowman (left) and Brian Smith, welder, replace a broken valve on the downstream side. (Right) A Bobcat skidsteer, which was craned in to help workers, Danny Bowman (left) and Brian Smith, welder, replace a broken valve on the downstream side.

do this at Locks 24 or 25 which are considerably older, due to the lack of downstream bulkheads at these facilities. I was amazed at Mel Price to see the amount of surface damage to the ogee section (curved sloping area immediately downstream of the dam gates) which had to have been caused by large stones which had worked their way under the gates when they were open into the dam section.” However, Quigley was quick to point out that the structure of the dam has not been compromised and that it is performing as designed.

Rewatering the dam gatebay will submerge its floor under more than 35 feet of Mississippi River water. And it will leave many discussions to be held about the invisible forces that work tirelessly under powerful rushing river waters, against which engineers must design structures to control them and skilled maintenance workers must develop innovative methods to safely go where people seldom can go.



warfed by the immense tainter gate. As seen here, the cables (above) Looking up from the base of one of nine dam gate bays at gate weighs some one million pounds and in concert with eight Mississippi River above the dam for safe navigation. It is about 150 size of the gate can be seen by comparing it with the hard-hatted edge. (Top, right) Corps of Engineers maintenance personnel dive in an access at the base of the Melvin Price's dam on the to the dewatered chamber, is dwarfed by the gigantic tainter



EAB, FROM PAGE 7

and furniture and is very common in the southeast portion of Missouri, as well as throughout the Mississippi River valley.”

The discovery of the EAB at Wappapello Lake is the first citing in the State of Missouri and the first on Corps of Engineers land. In addition to Michigan and Missouri, the EAB has also been found in eight other states: Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

“It was certainly upsetting news to learn that the EAB was here,” said Gary Stilts, Wappapello Lake operations manager. “We like to be first in things but not something like this. But it happened and we have it, and we’ll do everything possible to stop it here.”

Based on a dendrochronological test done by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, it appears that the EAB has been at the Old Greenville location for 4-5 years, within a year of the initial discovery in Michigan.

Despite the length of infestation, the EAB appears to have remained relatively confined. Infested trees have been found within a one-mile radius, approximately 120 acres, in and near the lake’s Old Greenville historic area and campground. Searches continue though for infested trees outside of this area.

The lake is taking on an aggressive strategy of tree removal to hopefully stop the spread of the EAB and contain this infestation. This has required permitting, special certifications, and coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and State Historic Preservation Office.

“We are attacking the problem on different levels and with several different strategies,” Gracey explained. “We will remove as many trees as possible before next spring



As the EAB infestation progresses damage begins to show at the tree tops first. Top branches begin to die, a phenomenon called ‘crown die-back,’ which is a symptom of a dying or stressed tree. These trees are located in the Old Greenville Campground. Crown die-back is not synonymous with an emerald ash borer infestation but it is something people can be on the look out for.

and then continue efforts in the summer. We won’t be done in one year.”

Because the EAB will attack ash trees ranging in size from 1-inch diameter to the largest in the forest, and the dense concentration of ash in the infected area, the impact could be the removal of hundreds of thousands of trees.

Unfortunately, tree removal is

the only way to eradicate the EAB, Gracey explained, but the staff will work responsibly. “Only ash trees are being targeted for removal,” Gracey said. “We will leave the other trees alone. We don’t want to remove trees that aren’t vulnerable to the EAB.”

Containment and eradication is a team effort drawing on the resources

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of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the Department of Agricultural, and many state agencies including the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Conservation.

Gracey, who has been a forester for 26 years and leads the natural resources team at Wappapello, said he and his team are embracing a “refuse to lose” moniker and are actively seeking ways to remove the trees at a low cost to the government and big benefit to the natural resource and those who enjoy it.

Gracey likened the infestation to having cancer. “If you have cancer and go into remission, you always monitor and keep up with your check-ups,” he said. “When we think the EAB is gone and that we have been successful, we will continue to monitor, because it could always be reintroduced.”

Additional steps being taken to help stop the spread and prevent additional infestation, include a federal and state quarantine on moving firewood out of Wayne County, Mo.

Visitors to Wappapello Lake and to Missouri are being urged to avoid bringing firewood in from out of

state. Transporting firewood is most likely the way EAB got to Wappapello Lake. The suspected area of initial infestation is right next to a campsite.

“The discovery of this highly destructive pest at a campground is a strong indication that it probably arrived in firewood,” said Rob Lawrence, Missouri Department of Conservation forest entomologist. “If people knew how devastating this insect can be, they would never consider bringing firewood from out of state.”

Ongoing efforts in Missouri are being closely watched by neighboring states. Gracey said that the ash tree population in Northeast Arkansas is about 50 percent, much higher than that in Missouri. “If the EAB is found in Arkansas it could have a devastating impact on the state’s forests,” he said.

“In reality, containing the EAB is going to be very difficult,” Gracey conceded, “but we aren’t going to give up without a fight. I don’t want to look back 10 to 15 years from now and wonder if we could have done more. We are going to do everything possible to keep the infestation contained. Using all the resources we have available. We are going to give 110 percent.”

Additional information:

<http://www.emeraldashborer.info/>

<http://mdc.mo.gov/forest/features/firewood.htm>



X marks the spot. James Gracey, a forester with the Corps at Wappapello Lake, points out the evidence that this tree in the Old Greenville Historic Area is infested with the emerald ash borer. The invasive species leaves its tracks below the bark in the cambium layer of the tree.



D-shaped exit holes mark the spot where the emerald ash borer has emerged in the spring. The beetles only live a few days and die after laying eggs on the bark of ash trees.

Something's fishy at Carlyle Lake

STORY BY MINDY CORY, PA STAFF

High school students throughout Illinois will gather at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Carlyle Lake Dam West Boat Ramp on May 8-9, 2009 to see who can reel in the best catch at the Illinois High School Association's inaugural Bass Fishing State Championship.

"It's a great opportunity to showcase the lake and the Corps to people across the state and even the country," said Carlyle Lake's Operations Manager Bob Wilkins. "A lot of media, even national coverage, is expected since this is the first high school bass fishing state tournament ever held."

The Corps is not the only agency working towards making the tournament a success.

"Our primary role is to make the lake and facilities available for the tournament," Wilkins said. "The City of Carlyle will provide seating for up to 1,000 spectators and other support needed for the event. We will also work safety and security in conjunction with the Clinton County Sheriff, IDNR Conservation Police, the Coast Guard Auxiliary and many volunteers."

The City of Carlyle has been issued a Special Use Permit from the Corps for use of the Dam West Boat Ramp as a starting location and weigh station for each day of the tournament.

Bill Gruen from the City of Carlyle submitted the winning bid to IHSA to be the host site for the tournament.

"We are very pleased with the cooperation from the Corps' staff," Gruen said. "They were very easy to work with, as they always are. We needed a lot of help to put together our proposal, and the Corps



The Dam West Recreation Area at Carlyle Lake

USACE photo by Alan Dooley

was very willing to help."

The tournament will be a boost for both the lake and the city. Gruen anticipates a lot of buzz generated from the tournament and he expects people to come out not only for the weekend of the tournament, but also to pre-fish so they can get to know the lake.

Fishing will not be limited to high school students only. The City of Carlyle has arranged a kids' fishing derby to be held at the hatchery pond in a nearby park. "This will give the little brothers and sisters that tag along something to do while the big kids are out on the lake," said Gruen.

It was eight years ago that the idea of a high school fishing first came up.

"We were looking for some alternative programs to add to our lineup," explained Dave Gannaway, assistant executive director of IHSA. "Since that time we've introduced several new programs including journalism and cheerleading."

He noted that it wasn't until June

2008 that IHSA voted to adopt the Bass Fishing State Series, making Illinois the first state in the country to sponsor a state championship in bass fishing.

Gannaway added that competitive fishing allows students who might not otherwise be interested in organized activities to be part of a team.

"One of IHSA's goals," said Gannaway "is to provide programs that touch all realms of the student body."

The series is open to all students, males or females from all grade levels, regardless of disability.

Gannaway, who has worked with the bass fishing program since the onset, was hoping to see 200 schools register this year. He got his wish. Out of over 700 eligible, there are currently 214 schools signed up for the series. However, only the very best will make it to the state championship at Carlyle.

Approximately 40 boats with one to three students each will be

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AT&T Pioneers complete projects at Wappapello

STORY BY **ANDREW JEFFERSON,**
PARK RANGER, WAPPAPELLO LAKE

Once again the AT&T Pioneers have volunteered time and resources to make Wappapello Lake a better place for all to visit. On September 12 and 13, 2008, 17 volunteers donated 213 hours on two projects to improve accessibility at Wappapello Lake. These included the construction of an accessible picnic site at the Old Greenville Recreation Area, and the construction of a concrete walkway to improve fishing access at a small pond at the Spillway Recreation Area called the "Blue Hole". The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers extends a hearty "Thank You" to the AT&T Pioneers for the awesome work performed during

this two day project.

For the past five years, the AT&T Pioneers have joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in cooperative agreements to improve public recreational facilities by providing facilities (like the picnic table and grill for the Greenville picnic site this year) and, more noteworthy, countless hours of volunteer labor. Such improvements over the years included work on a fishing pier and an accessible picnic site, both located within the Redman Creek Recreation Area. Visitors to the Memory Lane Historical Trail (located within the Greenville Recreation Area) will notice hundreds of feet of constructed boardwalk placed over badly deteriorated and missing sections of sidewalk.

These improvements made the trail more accessible for folks with mobility impairments and all who visit this area. The AT&T Pioneers were also successful in completing a sidewalk, providing access to the playground in the Greenville Recreation Area.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, on behalf of all the visitors to Wappapello Lake, commend these hardworking, talented individuals who selflessly donated their time to improve the public facilities at Wappapello Lake. So, whether you seek fishing, camping or picnicking opportunities or maybe a place for a child to play in the great outdoors, come out and experience these remarkable efforts of the AT&T Pioneers.



AT&T volunteers and Corps members at the concrete walkway they completed at Blue Hole, at the Spillway Recreation Area. Pictured are, back row: STEP employee Daniel King, Ida Solano, John Clawson, Nan Clawson, Natural Resources Specialist Doug Nichols. Front row: Justin Smith, Jeannie Pickard and Kathy Neely. Far right: STEP employee Joey Helm.

USACE photo by Chad Chenoweth, Park Ranger

Jingle all the way... to Wappapello Lake

STORY BY MINDY CORY, PA STAFF

Bundle up the kids, make some hot chocolate, and head to Wappapello Lake to escape the hustle and bustle of the holiday season.

Over a quarter million glistening lights will adorn Wappapello's Redman Creek East Campground during the 16th annual Festival of Lights Christmas Auto Tour hosted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wappapello Lions Club, and the Peoples Community Bank.

The Festival of Lights, which is free to attend, began Friday, November 28, and is open from dusk to 9:00 p.m. It will be available on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings until Wednesday, December 19 at which point it will be open every night through December 25.

Andrew Jefferson, a Park Ranger at the Southeast Missouri lake, takes great pride in helping to organize the festival, saying

"It brings people together," he states. "Every year we hope to see from 15 to 20 thousand visitors.

Last year, more than 24,000 people came out to see the lights."

In a true showing of community and holiday spirit, 55 individuals, families, businesses, and organizations have graciously volunteered their time to decorate the campsites.

"An average campsite can take around six hours to decorate. These are some very elaborate displays, not just a simple string of lights," Jefferson said.

Creativity is the name of the game. Many of the campsites are decorated with a particular theme. In years past, those themes have included nativity scenes, wooden cutouts of Disney characters, Christmas trees, and snowmen.

Roughly 80-90% of the decorators return year after year, but a few new ones always manage to join the festivities.

The Southeast Missouri Water Safety Council will have one of the highlight displays at the festival.

"We always manage to work wa-

ter safety into everything we do," Jefferson emphasized. "I would also like to encourage people to be extremely careful this time of year. It's very easy to let our guards down when we're relaxed."

It isn't just lights at the festival. Santa Claus makes regular appearances, and this year Bobber the Water Safety Dog will show his paws on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings. The Peoples Community Bank has purchased several thousand candy canes to be given out to everyone who comes through.

Although there is no fee, the Wappapello Lions Club does accept donations at the event. A percentage of the money goes back into the festival in the form of more lights to be used in future displays.

Driving through the Festival of Lights should take about 15 minutes, but the memories made will last a lifetime! Call Andrew Jefferson or Kathy Dickson at 573-222-8562 with any additional questions.



photo courtesy of Wappapello Lake

ST. LOUIS DISTRICT GROWS; NEW EMPLOYEES TAKE OATH



Col. Thomas E. O'Hara, Jr, District Commander, delivers the Oath of Office to recent St. Louis District hires.

USACE photo by Alan Dooley

Oath of Office

I, (state your name), do solemnly swear, that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.

BASS TOURNAMENT, FROM PAGE 12

allowed to participate in the championship at Carlyle. To qualify for the championship, a team must take 4th place or better in one of the 10 sectional tournaments held throughout the state on April 24.

While there is no regular season for the series, schools are able to determine their own level of involvement throughout the year. Some are holding regular meetings to discuss techniques and equipment, while others are participating in fishing-related conservation activities. Schools can also arrange contests among themselves at any time.

To assist participants with finding resources, IHSA has set up the website www.thefuturefisheshere.org that contains articles, links, photos, and information about the tournament.

Students are responsible for their own rods, reels,

tackle, and any other necessary equipment, but the schools are responsible for providing a boat and adult driver/coach. To keep costs down, several schools have made arrangements with local bass clubs to provide boats for the tournament.

Up to three students can be on a boat's roster, but only two can fish at a time. Boats must be driven by an adult coach, and all participants must wear lifejackets at all times. The boat that brings back the heaviest catch, not to exceed 5 fish, will be declared the winner.

Sponsors emphasize that there will be little to no negative impact on the lake's fish population. Once the fish have been weighed in and logged, they will be returned to the lake, safe and sound.

To see if your local high school is participating, check www.ihsa.org/activity/bsf. Here's wishing the best of luck to all of the teams. Have fun and be safe!

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SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ROBERT M. GATES

— SEE *STORY* ON PAGE 4 —

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